

Parks and Recreation

Overview

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Chapter is to connect Frederick's land use planning process and the City's development of parks and recreational facilities. This chapter identifies several areas where coordination between land use and recreation policies are necessary:

- Analyzing demographic trends to determine the amount, types and location of parks to serve future populations;
- Providing safe access to parks with sidewalks, shared-use paths and bicycle routes;
- Identifying opportunities for acquiring appropriate and usable parks for future populations;
- Generating income for parks through fee in lieu of parkland dedication and impact fees; and
- Coordinating the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan to change policies, City Code and the Land Management Code.

The City has 75 public parks, totaling 807 acres, with an average size of 10.7 acres equating to approximately 11 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, thereby exceeding the National Recreation and Parks Association guidelines of 9.9 acres per 1,000 residents. Also based on *2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review*, The typical agency has one park for every 2,281 residents. However, in jurisdictions with populations between 50,000 and 99,999, the ratio increases to one park for every 2,523 residents. The projected population in the year 2045 is 93,100 requiring at least 921 acres of parkland to comfortably serve the residents. As the City prepares for future growth, approximately 114 additional acres of parkland will be needed in the next 25 years.

Beyond the City boundaries, Frederick is located close to several County, state and national parks, including: *Gambrill State Park, Cunningham Falls State Park, Pinecliff Park, Shookstown Park, Braddock Heights Park, Ballenger Creek Park, Catoclin Mountain Park, and Monocacy National Battlefield*. These regional resources provide additional recreational opportunities for City residents. Although not maintained by the Parks and Recreational Department, the Frederick Watershed also serves as a regional recreational amenity.

In general, the existing community parks are well distributed throughout the City; particularly in the City's older and established neighborhoods. Figure 11-1 shows the existing park service areas. However, newer neighborhoods could benefit from an improved distribution of parks. For a more in-depth analysis of the City's parks and recreation facilities, an inventory of the parks will be provided as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

[Insert Map PR-1]

Westside Regional Park

In late 2008, the City purchased a 148-acre parcel of open space on its southwestern border with the intent of creating its first regional park. The property contains a historic farm complex and great views toward the Catoclin Mountains. It is surrounded by an increasingly dense urban environment and bounded on the south by I-70.

In 2012, an agreement was reached with the Frederick County Board of Education to transfer a 12-acre portion of the site for the new Butterfly Ridge Elementary School and provide for an access right of way. The remaining 130 acres of the land underwent further planning in 2014 in the form of an in-house concept plan with opportunity for public comment, all while interim uses were occurring (leasing portions for commercial agricultural use and community gardens).

In late 2015, consultant services were requested for a detailed feasibility study for a regional park and G.E. Fielder & Associates was selected to do this work. In 2016, they presented their findings, including a park master plan with an estimated cost for completion. In January 2017, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen officially adopted the Westside Regional Park Plan under Resolution 17-01.

The Westside Regional Park Plan has several distinct major attractions in separate areas:

1. Farmstead Complex and Open Space
2. Natatorium
3. Multipurpose Fields
4. Maintenance Yard

Important ancillary uses include accessible walking/biking trails and significant forest conservation areas.

In 2018, the City entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the nonprofit Sophie and Madigan's Playground, LLC to construct a destination playground in memory of Sophie and Madigan Lillard. It is anticipated that the park will be constructed by the end of 2020.

In addition, in 2020, the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Park Service who is interested in purchasing 8 acres to move its Historic Preservation Training Center and the Harpers Ferry Center Museum Conservation and Collections Facility.

[Insert Master Plan Concept]

Park and Recreation Master Plan

As of the drafting of this plan, the City has postponed hiring a qualified consultant to prepare a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan due to the COVID-19

pandemic. The goal of the project is to develop a community supported plan that provides guidance for future development and redevelopment of the City's parks, recreation programming, and facilities. The master plan will guide policy development, delivery of City services, prioritize demand and opportunities, and generate a strategic action plan. It will support expansion opportunities through a needs assessment using population growth and public demand. In addition, the plan will seek to incorporate energy efficiency and other sustainability strategies, opportunities to collaborate with other entities, accessibility issues, and capital repairs and replacements.

This chapter is not intended to replace the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; rather, it provides a forum for coordinating park and open space policies across multiple City departments. It is important to note that the goals and policies of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan are intended to support the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Parks and Recreation Policies and Implementation

PR Policy 1

Adopt a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide a framework for consistent planning, acquisition, development and administration of the parks and recreation resources, programs and facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Conduct outreach through interactive surveys to determine the community's demands and desires for facilities and programs.
2. Use demographic trends to forecast the amount, types and location of parks.
3. Develop criteria for acquiring and providing recreational opportunities to serve the existing and future populations.
 - a. Continue to meet or exceed the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) classification guidelines and standards to provide a minimum of 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
 - b. Identify and prioritize future passive and active recreational needs of underserved portions of the City.
 - c. Review development applications to determine if the application provides suitable land to further the goals of the Master Plan.
 - d. Create a park inventory database to guide decisions related to future acquisition of parkland.

4. Examine the current fee structure for payments made in lieu of parkland dedication and the Park Facilities Development Impact Fee to determine if adjustments are necessary to meet acquisition and programming needs.
5. Ensure maintenance and improvements of existing parks while expanding recreational facilities and programs for the community.
 - a. Ensure that existing parks, facilities and amenities are inventoried and prioritized for necessary maintenance and improvements in existing parks.
 - b. Allow for protection and regeneration of environmentally sensitive areas while providing educational opportunities to teach users on the value of these ecosystems.
 - c. Encourage volunteerism in the maintenance of parks and recreational facilities including promotion of the “Friends of the Park” program.
 - d. Establish an “adopt-a-stream” program to help protect and enhance the stream valley system.
6. Establish and maintain a monitoring system that measures progress towards achieving the goals of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
7. Develop an Action plan identifying future actions and improvements and designating them as short term, mid-term and long term initiatives.

PR Policy 2

Expand the City’s green corridors and trail network to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to parks and regional trails.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Improve access from neighborhood and commercial areas to recreational facilities for all users.
2. Construction of shared-use paths consistent with the Transportation Chapter and the adopted Shared Use Path Plan, required by new developments.
3. Work with TransIT to enhance bus connections to all community and regional parks.
4. Collaborate with utility companies and Home Owner Associations (HOA’s) to use easement space for bike paths where appropriate.
5. Develop prioritization of capital projects, with emphasis on completing missing links.

6. Coordinate with the County on implementation of border trail links and funding applications where applicable

PR Policy 3

Promote the appreciation and preservation of Frederick's historic and cultural heritage in park system planning and design.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Incorporate local history and heritage by incorporating significant historic resources into the design of parks and in park elements through interpretative signs and public art.
2. Promote and facilitate performing arts and cultural festivals in park facilities.
3. Incorporate significant historic resources into the design of parks.

PR Policy 4

Collaborate with Frederick County and other agencies to enhance parks and recreational facilities for the City's residents.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Continue to work with the Board of Education on issues such as the development of joint use facility agreements to provide for shared use of school facilities for public recreational programs.
2. Establish partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations to enhance the variety, quality, and accessibility of recreation programming and facilities available to the City of Frederick residents.
3. Encourage Frederick County to provide additional resources for the enhancement and maintenance of the City park system.

PR Policy 5

Actively incorporate the considerations of underrepresented communities and low-income residents communities in public recreation decision-making.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Coordinate with community groups active among underrepresented communities and with low-income residents for public outreach to elevate and include those voices in public discourse and decision-making.

2. Actively recruit underrepresented populations to advisory boards, committees, and other volunteer positions.
3. Identify and work to mitigate barriers to public recreation facility use by low-income residents.
4. Commission a comprehensive anti-racism plan with recommendations for recreation policy.